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Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
CASA of Maryland Inc.
Catholic Charities
Center for Urban Families
Energy Advocates
Episcopal Community Services
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Interfaith Works
Jewish Community Relations Council
of Greater Washington
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Maryland Budget & Tax Policy
Institute
Maryland CASH Campaign
Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Maryland Interfaith
Legislative Committee
National Council on Alcoholism &
Drug Dependence – Maryland Chapter
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
United Way of Central Maryland
Welfare Advocates

Maryland Alliance for the Poor

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB450 MARYLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH RESOURCES COMMISSION - HEALTH CARE REFORM - SAFETY NET PROVIDERS

**Health Governmental Operations Committee,
February 17, 2011**

Submitted by Branden McLeod, Chair

The Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) is a statewide coalition of advocacy organizations, service providers and faith communities working together to advocate on behalf of Marylanders living in or near poverty. Our membership also includes safety net health care providers. MAP supports HB450.

Since July, MAP and its members have closely followed the actions of the Health Reform Coordinating Committee. We consistently submitted comments and testimony asking the Council to include supports for safety-net providers in their report. When the report was submitted to the Governor in January, we were pleased to see the Council's recommendation encouraging active participation of safety net providers in health reform and new insurance options. Now the question before the State is how to implement this recommendation.

Safety-net providers face a wide range of challenges as health reform is implemented in Maryland. They face uncertainty about how to access new funding streams from the Federal Government, how to adapt from a grant funded model to a Medicaid billing model, where there will be gaps in services, and how they can successfully partner with local hospitals and healthcare providers.

Granting the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission the authority to provide technical assistance to safety net providers would greatly assist safety net providers as they navigate the new world of health care reform. The smoother this transition is, the better the result for vulnerable Marylanders who depend on safety net providers for their health care needs.

We urge a favorable report on HB450. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.